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**SECTION:** CERTIFICATION

**SUBJECT:** Factors Affecting Eligibility

**ITEM:** *Waiting Lists*

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**Policy** Local agencies serving their maximum monthly caseload allocation, as set forth in the local agency contract, shall establish and maintain waiting lists of individuals who visit the agency to express an interest in receiving program benefits.

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**Purpose of waiting lists** The purpose of waiting lists is to maintain a “pool” of persons interested in the WIC program from which those in the highest priorities can be selected to participate. It is meant to be a functional tool to assist local agencies in the placement of the highest priorities. If it is unlikely that caseload availability will allow enrollment of lower priority applicants in the near future, it is not necessary to place those persons on a waiting list. However, waiting lists must not be so restrictive that applicants who might reasonably be expected to be served later are not, due to the agency’s failure to place them on a waiting list. If a local agency cannot reasonably ascertain future priorities likely to be served, all applicants shall be placed on a waiting list.

Local agencies shall explain to applicants why placement on a waiting list is necessary and shall explain the realistic possibilities of receiving future benefits. Local agencies may *not* refuse to place any applicant on a waiting list if the applicant requests to be placed on such a list.

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**Priorities** Local agencies shall maintain waiting lists in accordance with the priority ranking system. Individuals in each priority which the local agency is currently unable to serve but reasonably expects to serve in the future shall be placed on a waiting list. Applicants shall be recorded on the waiting list according to their potential priority in the order in which they apply for services.

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**Content of Waiting Lists** The waiting list shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

1. Name of applicant
2. Mailing address of applicant and telephone number if applicable
3. Category of applicant (i.e., pregnant woman, breastfeeding woman, postpartum woman, infant, or child)
4. Date applicant placed on the waiting list
5. Potential priority

## **Procedures for maintaining waiting lists**

### **1. New Applicants:**

- a. Screen the applicant for residency and income eligibility.
- b. Screen the applicant for anthropometric, biochemical, and physical/medical problems.
  - o If medical data (height, weight, and hemoglobin/hematocrit values) are available, the presence of an anthropometric, biochemical, or physical/medical risk can be assessed, which would place the applicant in a higher priority category than if only a dietary inadequacy were present.
  - o If the applicant applies for program benefits without the medical information necessary to determine an anthropometric, biochemical, or physical/medical risk, she/he will be placed on the appropriate lower priority waiting list for those persons having dietary risks only. Self-reported information on past or current medical problems may be accepted by the local agency for purposes of assessing the applicant's potential priority.

Example: A pregnant woman who informs the local agency staff of previous obstetric problems but does not have documentation available from her health care provider may be placed on the waiting list for those persons potentially eligible as Priority I.

- o A dietary assessment may be performed, but is not required to determine the individual's potential priority.
- c. Place the applicant on a waiting list according to her/his potential priority in chronological order of application.

Example: A two-year old child referred to WIC because of a low hematocrit is potentially eligible as a Priority III. Therefore, the child would be placed at the bottom of the waiting list for persons potentially eligible for Priority III.

- d. Inform the applicant, either verbally or in writing, that she/he has been placed on a waiting list. This must be done within 20 days of the applicant's visit to the local agency to request program benefits.

### **2. Transferring Participants:**

- a. If a transferring participant with a current Verification of Certification (VOC) card applies for continuing services and the agency is not enrolling additional persons because they are serving their monthly caseload allocation, the participant shall be placed on a waiting list and enrolled ahead of all other persons on the waiting list regardless of priority.
- b. If more than one transferring participant with a current VOC card must be placed on a waiting list, she/he shall be placed in order of priority.

**Enrolling  
from waiting  
lists**

1. When an opening occurs at the local agency, the agency shall contact applicants to schedule a certification appointment.
  - a. Contact applicants by telephone or letter, starting with those individuals on the transfer waiting lists. If a transfer waiting list has not been necessary and is not available contact applicants on the highest priority waiting list.
  - b. After all transfers and applicants on the highest priority waiting list have been contacted, proceed to other lists in order of priority.

Example: A local agency which has been maintaining waiting lists for Priorities I through IV now has 25 spaces available for enrollment. The agency would begin contacting applicants from the Priority I waiting list. After all Priority I applicants had been contacted for a certification appointment, the agency would proceed to the Priority II waiting list, then to Priority III, etc.
2. If a local agency does *not* have sufficient caseload available to enroll all applicants within a priority, the agency may enroll applicants on a first-come, first-served basis or on the basis of the severity of the risk factors, as determined by the local agency nutritionist/registered dietitian.
3. If an applicant fails to keep the scheduled certification appointment, she/he shall be removed from the waiting list.

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**Disqualifica-  
tion of  
current  
participants**

A current participant whose priority is lower than applicants on waiting lists shall be disqualified at the end of the current certification period in order to make space available for higher priority applicants. The participant shall then be placed on the appropriate waiting list for her/his priority ranking if the agency reasonably expects to serve that priority in the future.

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